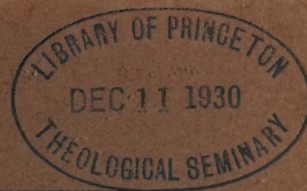


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The Church's Place in
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by

JOHN H. WOOD

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THE CHURCH'S PLACE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY JOHN H. WOOD

"Ye are the light of the world," said Jesus.

"Put on the armor of light," exhorted Paul.

"Go teach" was the driving command of the Master.

The Church for fifty-eight generations has not doubted its mission or its power under God to teach and to train men for leadership and statesmanship for the Church and for the State. According to the measure of the understanding and vision of her leaders the Church has been an educator and a teacher. Christianity has been the mother of education and the founder of colleges. This is true in Europe, America and the uttermost parts of the earth.

And to-day the Church has officially surrendered no territory and has abdicated no teaching function, but she has failed to develop the educational field and has abdicated, by neglect, great teaching opportunities. Lack of vision and understanding and an unwillingness to pay the price has circumscribed her program. A divided church, often narrow and bigoted, with prejudices and hates, has kept the Church from a full, free abandon to the great task of education. Conservatism, legalism and party spirit have robbed her of zeal and enthusiasm in a great cause.

The Church at one time practically controlled all

education. But the task was too big and the State first took over primary and secondary education and developed an efficient and comprehensive system. In higher education the time came when education could not be limited to the few. It was not enough to train an educated ministry and leaders. Most church colleges were organized for that specific purpose.

✓ The State needed trained teachers, professional men, technical men, business men. It needed thousands of them to meet the demands of a growing civilization. The Church schools were slow to sense this fact and the resources available were too small for the task; so states organized universities, teachers' colleges and technical schools to meet the imperative needs of life and civilization. Church and State were separate, so religion had no official place. The State by taxation commanded funds for a great program. The Church with old methods of approach had no program for meeting this new development with an adequate religious impact. Opposition and criticism and even misrepresentation could not stop State education. It is well that it could not; for State education has liberalized the Church. The Church has made new adjustments and faces the world with new vigor, and a larger understanding and a greater reverence for all truth. Church colleges have been compelled to raise their academic standards and to enlarge their curricula; to raise their endowments and to pay their teachers better salaries.

Again we have had to revise our thinking as to State schools. State institutions are not Godless. They have their problems. Tens of thousands of youth brought on campuses make problems, but many of the most capable and Godly men are seeking the best methods of developing strong character and life on State campuses. Hundreds of high-minded, idealistic youth are coming through these institutions in a fine way and are leaders in church and community life everywhere.

We are told "There are strong tides driving in the direction of complete elimination of the church, biblical and religious instruction and religious work from the colleges and universities in America," and that "determined forces are driving hard to secularize the American college and university whether under State or Church auspices." I do not doubt the truth of these statements in the main. The forces of darkness and self-centered indulgence are always driving hard against the idealistic. Religion is just too old-fashioned for many. Christian virtues are stubborn: they stand in the way of the conceited mind in a selfish age. Material progress with ease and wealth and luxury chafes under any authority or constraint.

It is an old battle. The same forces and tides that seek to eliminate religion from the campuses of higher education seek also to eliminate religion everywhere. The same strong tides are driving against the home, the church, constitutional government and every idealistic and worth-while thing in our civilization.

The perils of secularization are confined to no one area of human life or thinking. They assail the full round circle of human endeavor. If we are lining up in Christian battle against secularism let us not be deceived as to the extent of the battle front. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Eternal vigilance is the price of spiritual power as well. Modern civilization faces perils and the race faces the loss of its most sacred treasures because of a spirit of ease, luxury and softness. Waves of pessimism, criticism and suspicion are in evidence in every social stratum, in every mart of trade and industry. Men want quick riches with little labor. Business leaders, church leaders, big men in politics, have a common passion for money at any cost. It is not surprising that the gangster has the same idea. A hopeful fact stands out, however.

There is deep concern for the future of our institu-

* tions. What is the basic cause of the crime wave and of the moral let-down? Is it the lack of education? Never has there been a greater program of education than to-day, with thirty millions of boys and girls in grade and high schools and nearly one million in colleges and universities. Billions of dollars are spent each year for education. Facing the conditions as they are to-day it is evident that education alone does not stabilize society nor bring security. Does it not seem clear that we have left something out of our plan of education? What does Education do?

x Education brings power, ability to think and to create, to make discoveries and inventions. It multiplies the individual powers many fold. Why, then, with much power and advancement, are there so many evidences of failure? We are told that progress is the release and control of power. Education releases power: the point of failure quite clearly then is in the control factor. The factor that through generations has sobered and controlled men has been the moral factor—religious idealism. The moral quality develops a sense of obligation—a conviction of duty and service. It is a strange paradox that civilization and education inspired by Christianity are destroying the very vital factors that made that civilization possible. The conceit of learning is a dangerous conceit.

✓
* Religion and education are the two dynamic forces in the progress and civilization of the race. They are human forces, personal forces. They appeal to human personality and are projected from human personality. Religion and education must go hand in hand or both suffer disaster. The emotional is not enough in religion; there must be deep conviction and common sense. Education and religion supplement and balance each other. Together they enable men to release power and direct it in a constructive way. Together they enable succeeding generations to camp on higher ground. Together they inspire the race to high courage and

confidence and to the firm establishment of the spirit of sacrifice and heroism. They challenge to a task, to the romance of living, to the adventure of the soul.

At the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, President Coolidge said of the founders of Andover: "While careful provision was made to increase the intellectual power of the students, even greater emphasis was placed on increasing their moral power. The attention of the master was especially directed to the fact that knowledge without goodness is dangerous, and he was charged constantly to instruct the students in the precepts of the Christian religion." President Coolidge then added in general terms: "Our doctrine of equality and liberty, of humanity and charity, comes from our belief in the brotherhood of man through the fatherhood of God. The whole foundation of enlightened civilization in government, in society and in business, rests on religion. Unless our people are thoroughly instructed in its great truths they are fitted neither to understand our institutions nor to provide them with adequate support.

"For our independent colleges and secondary schools to be neglectful of their responsibilities in this direction is to turn their graduates loose with simply an increased capacity to prey upon each other. Such a dereliction of duty would put in jeopardy the whole fabric of society.

"For our chartered institutions of learning to turn back to the material and neglect the spiritual would be treason—not only to the cause for which they were founded, but to man and to God." Where are we to-day?

If, as charged, the church and religion are being eliminated from higher education in America: if the home and business and social life are being swept by the same tides of unbelief, need there be surprise at a general breakdown of ideals and character? What else can be expected?

But paint the picture as dark as you please. Suppose conditions are even worse than yet revealed. What is the Church going to say? Is she going to say meekly that she has no place in colleges and universities? Or shall the church declare it will not consent to such elimination? If conditions are bad in higher education, if church loyalty is being broken down, if character is being disintegrated instead of builded, "there is but one agency or institution in the world whose business is to bring correction and that agency is the Church." The more evident these dark facts become, the larger is the responsibility of the Church to enter. But, you say, the church is not wanted.

The Church has never asked whether it is wanted or not. It asks whether it is needed. The spirit of Christianity does not wait for invitation. It goes where religion is not, under the driving conviction that it is necessary, and that it is the business of the Church to find a way to succeed. This must be the reborn spirit in the Church to-day.

How is the church to function in the largest way for success in higher education? How can results be gained in the whole field? A united church could answer this question most successfully. But standing as we do to-day, divided, what course should the Disciples follow?

First we should make stronger our national Board of Education. It is imperative that we have not only the best statesmanship, but the united support of our churches for a great comprehensive movement forward, in which religion and education will build a civilization together.

The old individualistic and independent plan of each college for itself must pass. A brotherhood program, looking to the whole field, is the only adequate plan. This plan must include our church colleges which have made mighty contributions to our leadership and progress as a people. It should include the student

bodies of state universities and all state colleges. The thousands of young men and women there stand in need of spiritual inspiration and guidance. Spiritual interpretation of life is their right. The Church dare not fail them.

They must know the glow and joy of idealism in life. The Board of Education must have strong financial backing so that its program may be statesmanlike. It should have millions. It should survey the whole field and give support at strategic points, aiding both the strong and the weak and guiding all to greater efficiency. This educational body must be wise enough to build the confidence of a great brotherhood in its program.

To this end our church colleges must receive encouragement and be aroused to vigorous action. Courage must be builded into the souls of those who guide the destinies of these institutions. The Board of Education must resound the slogan "Put on the armor of light." Young men and women in colleges and universities must not part company with ideals and religion which have made civilization possible, and without which the future is hopeless. The youth of to-day have the same spiritual needs and the same soul-hunger as in the past. The Church must find a way to challenge the heroic that is in the soul of the youth of every generation. It is the business of the Church to find the way. If old methods do not work, let us find new ways. And parenthetically I wish to make this observation: All the trouble is not in higher learning. Homes have a duty. Young men and women without home training in the basic principles of life are the despair of colleges. The college period of life is too late for laying foundations for character. Integrity, faith, and ideals must be youth's heritage from the home if institutions of higher learning are to turn out a worthy product.

What is to be the Church's part in higher education? 

Certainly its part is not one of critical, pessimistic antagonism. Perhaps the Church has had too much of that attitude already. Certainly the Church is not to be in the grip of a "defeatist" psychology. It must not think in terms of defeat. I am not unmindful that there are perils. What age has not met perils or what great cause but has gone through many! Much has been said, recently, of the peril in the rise of the Junior College on the one hand and the Professional School on the other, with the expressed fear that there was no place for the four-year college. This, to me, is a phantom fear: a nightmare produced by poorly digested facts. ✓ The strong and efficient college need have no fear. Its program, its work, its product justify its life. It is entrenched in the common sense of its patrons who know its history and who in confidence entrust their sons and daughters to its transforming power. Some of these perils are more imaginary than real. The peril of rising standards has made better colleges. Economic perils may be but the opportunity for larger vision and enlarged resources. The Church must be put on her mettle.

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The church college may be small, but it can be made efficient and strong. It may command as strong men on its faculty as do large institutions. It may fill its halls with a superior type of students. It may be necessary to merge some institutions: statesmanship may demand it. Some may die. But a wise Board of Education can advise and direct the destiny of those whose future is worth-while. A church college must be strong and distinctive. A church college is not just another college. It has a distinctive purpose. It must have some originality and independence in curriculum. In order to live colleges must have academic standards: must be real colleges. Their work must rank high. They must seek to develop great personalities, to put fire into the souls of men. They must teach students to see things in right proportion, to see big things as big and little things as little. The things that make men and build a worthy

race are always big. The material things which rob the soul and dwarf personality are small. It takes courage and will to keep this distinction.

Again, a strong Board of Education will survey great institutions with care and seek for methods best suited to bring religion to the students. These will probably include Bible chairs, supplemented by social centers and strong churches, or it may include a Bible college just across the street from the campus, as at the University of Missouri. But everywhere, at all these institutions, whether Church or State, there should be strong churches with the most capable men to command the situation. Men for these places should be personalities and their message should inspire and thrill. Youth is the period when such messages appeal to the weather of the soul. Christian eloquence has won its millions and at no place does the appeal count for more than at college centers. Local churches at these centers should have support from outside sources.

A strong Board of Education could help direct the selection and the training of a choice body of young men whose ability and power is definitely known. Some could prepare to be college executives, some to be teachers, and some to deliver the challenging message. The Church is a mighty power when aroused, but when she sleeps it is tragedy for the race. In this nervous, pleasure-seeking age, in this complex age of contending forces, the Church of our Lord must not slumber. In this age of the dissipated mind, mighty issues are at stake, and if the Church fails our young manhood and womanhood, there is no other voice. If the church, the moral custodian of society through the centuries, does not "put on the armor of light", the powers of darkness triumph.

The earnest desire on the part of churchmen, statesmen and citizens to see the institutions that they love perpetuated, conserved, and handed down to coming

generations, is to be praised and honored. But how is it to be done? That is the mooted question. Some think that established corner-stones can be placed irrevokably, fixed boundaries defined, and the last word said. It simply can not be done that way. Your sons and grandsons will pull up your corner-stones and reestablish boundaries. They will say the last word in their generation. You may just as well be happy and sweet about it. They will use their own minds and draw their own conclusions. We spend much energy on the problems of our own day (and most of them are not solved) and, not satisfied, we want to settle the problems of the future. And you can not do it. In the first place, you do not know the problems of the next generation. Our grandparents did not know what our keenest problems would be. It would not be treating the generations coming after us right if we could solve their problems. Character, life and power come by solving problems and meeting crises. So let them have the joy of it and the elation of victory. They will, whether you wish to let them or not.

There is just one way to insure the future in higher education, religion or government. Train a generation of youth to think straight, to live clean, and to cherish ideals and live them; to be confident and full of courage. Then whatever problems come you can trust such sons to solve them. Whatever the difficulties or obstacles they will remove them or go through.

When the great labor strike was on in England, some years after the close of the world war, many freely predicted that the hour had struck and that the dissolution of a great empire had begun. I did not believe it then and I know I do not believe it now. The sons of Oxford, Cambridge and Glasgow had been trained for such an hour. The problems, though many, are being met and the Anglo-Saxon courage and genius which has builded through upheavals, revolutions and changes,

still builds and new problems are being solved and new crises met.

Great dangers produce great men and bring great issues to a climax. This is true in the history of nations and is no exception in the history of the Church. In the world war, when the German hosts seemed certain to sweep down on Paris, General Foch sent this dispatch to Paris as he faced the onslaught of the German war machine, "My left is overwhelmed; my right is giving way; situation is excellent; am ordering my attack on the German center." You can not beat a spirit like that. Paris was saved. At this hour the Church, having put on the armor of light, must have that same spirit of heroic confidence, that same driving daring which will turn back the powers that threaten civilization. x

A few years ago I heard George Arliss in the great play "Old English". One scene burned itself in my memory. The old Englishman, president of the great shipping corporation—so old and feeble he had to be helped to his feet every time he addressed the assembled directors and stockholders—was in the midst of a stormy session. Accustomed dividends had not been paid, affairs were not prospering; but the old president had come before these representatives of the corporation with a recommendation that new shipping lines be purchased and business extended to more distant ports, a comprehensive plan for world commerce inaugurated. There was hostile opposition, but the old president, still with fire and vision in his soul, drove through his recommendation and then said, "Gentlemen, I say to you now, what I have said through the years of the successes of this great corporation, 'Go forward or you go backward'." And, representatives of the Christian Church of America, that expresses my conviction as to the part of the Church in higher education—"Go forward or you go backward". The great commission still lives and the command is "Forward"! A

FACULTY NOTES

Dr. John H. Wood, author of the article in this issue, has been president of Culver-Stockton College since 1917. He is a graduate of the University of Missouri and has been a member of the Board of Curators of Northeast Missouri State Teachers' College. He has taught at Christian College, Columbia, Missouri, served as pastor of Missouri churches, and had extensive experience in the banking field. His administration at Culver-Stockton has been marked by progressive business management and financial advancement. For two years he has been president of the national Board of Education of the Disciples of Christ. The present article was read before the international convention of the Disciples at Washington, D.C., during October, 1930.

A historical pageant, called *Cantonian*, was written by Dr. W. E. Schultz, Professor of English Literature, and directed by him on October 18 as a part of the centennial celebration. Dr. Schultz was born in Canton, the son of a native Cantonian and the grandson of an early settler of the town; and it was particularly fitting that he should have charge of this performance at the river. In production he was assisted by several faculty members, including Mrs. True Taylor, Mrs. Ada Roberts, L. G. Fascinato, and Professor Byron Ingold. Other teachers were actively engaged in the work of the general anniversary program. The book of the pageant has been published and widely distributed.

Professor Ronald J. Neil, of the Department of Fine Arts, is on leave of absence this year to study Voice at Syracuse University. His work here is being conducted by Mrs. N. F. Romjue, Supervisor of Music in the public schools of Hannibal, Missouri.

Albert F. Elsea, of Northeast Missouri State Teachers' College and Peabody College for Teachers, has been added to the faculty, having charge of extension courses in neighboring towns. He and his wife taught in the 1930 summer session of Culver-Stockton.

Dr. Harold E. Briggs had an article in the *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, January, 1930, entitled "The Great Dakota Boom, 1879—1886."

Recent numbers of the *Culver-Stockton Quarterly* have been in great demand, especially the one for July, 1930, containing Miss Madeline Stinson's paper on "Contemporary French Literature as Seen in Translation". Each issue of this publication, containing one article only, is listed in the *Cumulative Book Index*, as a separate monograph, and is thus placed on prominent bibliographical record. Librarians, research scholars, teachers, and others interested are invited to send for items of special concern.



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